



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

traffic of the Merremengows is in ivory, skins, rhinoceros' horn, &c.; which they exchange for wire and beads. Their religion I am not acquainted with; but they are not circumcised.

A CATALOGUE OF WOODS.

Sohilie Name.	Diameter. in.	Height. feet.	Use.
Mungorule . . .	18 . .	19 . .	Bedsteads, boxes, &c.
Mupingo (crooked) . . .	10 . .	13 . .	Bedsteads, &c.
Monyonvouro . . .	18 . .	19 . .	Ship-building.
Mechano . . .	19 . .	14 . .	Doors, &c.
Mowoula . . .	36 . .	60 . .	Ship-building.
Mosendee . . .	22 . .	50 . .	Masts for dows.
Monamage . . .	40 . .	26 . .	Ship-building.
Mananingya . . .	26 . .	30 . .	Ship-building, &c.
Mucongarcharlee . . .	28 . .	22 . .	Doors, &c.
Mocungue . . .	24 . .	28 . .	Ship-building.
Mulelana . . .	7 . .	12 . .	Rafters, &c.

VI.—*Memorandum respecting the Pearl Fisheries in the Persian Gulf.* Communicated by Colonel D. Wilson, late Resident in the Persian Gulf, &c.

As the pearls fished in this gulf are known and esteemed all over the world, it may be interesting to say something respecting the manner in which they are procured, and the wonderful extent and value of this single article of commerce, which produces the means of subsistence for nearly the whole population of the Arabian shore of this sea. The land produces little else besides dates, but they even are not in sufficient quantities to support the whole of the population; supplies therefore must be imported. A handful or two of dates and a little salt fish, with occasionally a little rice or wheat, washed down with brackish or bitter water, forms the general food of the Arabs of the coast.

The most extensive pearl-fisheries are those on the several banks not far distant from the island of Bharein; but pearl-oysters are found, more or less, along the whole of the Arabian coast, and round almost all the islands of this gulf. Such as are fished in the sea near the islands Kharrack and Borgo, contain pearls which are said to be of a superior colour and description, from being formed of eight layers or folds, whilst others have only five: but the water is too deep to make fishing for them either very profitable or easy there; besides, the entire monopoly of the fishery is in the hands of the Shaik of Bushire, who seems to consider these islands as his immediate property.

The fishing season is divided into two portions, the one called the short and cold, the other the long and hot; what is called the short or cold fishery is common everywhere. In the cooler weather of the month of June, diving is practised along the coast in shallow water; and it is not until the intensely hot months of July, August, and half of September, that the Bharein banks, above mentioned, are much frequented. The water on them is deeper (about seven fathoms), and the divers are much inconvenienced when that element is cold; indeed they can do little when it is not as warm as the air, and it frequently becomes even more so in the hottest months of the summer, above-mentioned.

When they dive, they have a small piece of horn that compresses the nostrils tightly and keeps the water out; they stuff their ears with bees-wax for the same purpose. They also attach a net to their waists, to contain the oysters; and aid their descent by means of a stone, whilst they hold by a rope attached to a boat, and shake it when they wish to be drawn up. From what I can learn, two minutes may be considered as rather above the average time of their remaining under water; and the employment of diving, although severe labour, and very exhausting at the time, is not considered very injurious to the constitution,—even old men practise it; and a person usually dives from twelve to fifteen times in a day in favourable weather, but when it is not so, three or four times only. The work is performed on an empty stomach. When the diver becomes fatigued, he goes to sleep, and does not eat until he has been refreshed by doing so.

At Bharein alone, the annual amount produced by the pearl-fishery may be reckoned at from 1,000,000 to 1,200,000 German crowns (the coin current there), or £200,000*l.* for the first sum: if to this the purchases made by the Bharein merchants and agents at Aboothatu, Sharga, Rasub Khymah, &c. be added, which may amount to the value of half as much more, there will be a total of about 1,500,000 German crowns, or 300,000*l.*; but this is calculated to include the whole pearl trade of this gulf, for it is believed that all the principal merchants of India, Arabia, and Persia, who deal in this article, make their purchases through agents at Bharein. I have not admitted in the above estimate much more than *one-sixth* of the amount some native merchants have stated it to be, as a good deal seemed to be matter of guess or opinion, and it is difficult to get at facts; my own estimate is in some measure formed on the estimated profits of the small boats. But even the sum which I have estimated is an enormous annual value for an article found in other parts of the world as well as here, and which is never used, in its best and most valuable state, as anything else than an ornament. A considerable quantity of the seed pearls is used throughout Asia, in the composition of majoons or elec-

tuaries, to form which all kinds of precious stones are occasionally mixed, after being pounded,—excepting indeed diamonds, which are considered (from being so hard) as utterly indigestible. The majoon, in which there is a large quantity of pearls, is much sought for, and valued on account of its supposed stimulating and restorative qualities. But I presume, that pearls are nothing more than sulphate of lime; and that Cleopatra's draught was a luxury only in the imagination.

The Bharein pearl fishing-boats are reckoned to amount to about fifteen hundred; and the trade is in the hands of merchants there, some of whom possess a considerable capital. They bear hard on the producers or fishers, and the man who makes most fearful exertions in diving, hardly has food to eat. The merchant advances some money to the fisherman, at cent. per cent., and a portion of dates, rice, and other necessary articles, all at the supplier's own price; he also lets a boat to them, for which he gets one share of the gross profits of all that is fished; and, finally, he purchases the pearls nearly at his own price, for the unhappy fishermen are generally in his debt, and therefore at his mercy.

The following may be reckoned the common mode of proceeding:—five ghowass or “divers,” and five syebor or “pullers up,” agree to take a boat together: the capitalist may probably already have lent these ten men about two hundred and fifty crowns to support their families during the former part of the year; perhaps they were unfortunate in the fishery of last year, and gained little.

It is supposed they may gain in the current year, what the capitalist, in his generosity, may value and receive for one thousand German crowns, which is considered fair success, perhaps above the common for a season. The division would be as follows:—

Total value acquired,—German crowns	1000
Deduct first one-eleventh to the capitalist for the boat	90
	<hr/> 910
Secondly, 250 crowns, advanced generally in food, &c.	250
	<hr/> 660
Thirdly, 100 per cent. on 250 crowns advanced	250
	<hr/> 410
Fourthly, 5 crowns from each fisherman, paid as a }	
tax to the shaik or chief of the island . . . }	50
	<hr/> 360
Balance	360

to be divided among the ten fishermen, leaving thirty-six German crowns to each.

If the fishermen be unlucky, or the season be bad, they may not, as is sometimes the case, realize the sum expended, and must then irretrievably get in debt, becoming thereby for ever at the mercy of the rapacious capitalist; others, again, may be fortunate in getting a large draught of valuable pearls, and thus rise into capitalists themselves. Occasionally, the oysters are brought on shore before being opened, and sold as a gambling venture; but they are generally opened at sea, and the pearls taken out. The largest shells are preserved; many are from six to nine inches in diameter, and are valuable on account of the mother-of-pearl with which they are lined. The oyster itself is never eaten even in a country where food is so scarce.

It is not always on the spot where the article is produced that it is easiest to be procured, or, when so, to be had cheapest, or of the best quality. In most places engagements, of a nature something similar to those mentioned above, are made; and the produce is thus forestalled generally for a foreign market before it is actually acquired. Individuals, who are not merchants, are always made to pay very dearly for the liberty of selecting things of the first quality, as taking them away diminishes the general merchantable estimation of produce; and men who deal in the rough and wholesale will not, without a considerable bribe, thus reduce the value of their goods below the common level. This may account for more being demanded from individuals making selections for fine pearls here, than they probably could be bought for in London. Indifferent and bad pearls are abundant and cheap; and they are used in great profusion in embroidering both the dresses of women and men in Persia. A blue velvet upper garment, tastefully embroidered in pearls, has a magnificent appearance. But, respecting the larger and more valuable pearls, what would pass current among eastern nations as good and suitably arranged, as to shape, size, and water, would be rejected in Europe as intolerably mixed and utterly ill-assorted. There is the same difference in the estimation of flaws, and the "water" in stones and jewels. But, indeed, want of precision and an indistinctness, both in the perception of ideas and their delivery, is more apparent among Asiatics in general than Europeans. Individuals of the eastern and western quarters of the world might all mean to speak the truth, but how differently composed would the description of anything by a Persian, an Arab, or an Indian be, from that of an Englishman!
